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Science . . . Medicine

Cancer Society Issues Young-Smoker Study

By Robert C. Toth

ATLANTIC CITY, Oct. 21.—The American Cancer Society today announced some of the results of a study aimed at finding the best way to dissuade young people from smoking.

The survey found that both boys and girls in high school answer like children when questioned about smoking, but react in adult ways to logical reasoning on the subject.

Boys, for example, tended to say they don't smoke because it costs too much, it interferes with their wind, or similar immediate reasons. They dismiss quickly the arguments that say smoking is bad in the long run, with such comments as, "I can quit by then."

Long-Range Reasons

But the presentation that is most effective in curbing smoking argues from the long-range point of view, that more illnesses come in middle age and death comes earlier for smokers, according to Dr. Daniel Horn, program evaluation director of the Cancer Society. He reported to the American Public Health Association.

Of five possible types of presentation, this one cut the recruitment rate of smokers almost in half, from 13 to 7.7 per cent, in one school year, he said.

Girls also derided the long-range reasons for refraining from smoking, yet this approach was again most effective. It cut the recruitment rate among girls to one-third, from 6.4 to 2.1 per cent.

However, the immediate approach was equally effective with girls. That smoking reduces their "kissability" was a very meaningful argument, Dr. Horn said in an interview.

These reductions in the school smoking population "may seem small," Dr. Horn acknowledged, "yet if carried out cumulatively for four years, it would mean that about 20 per cent of our high school students who would otherwise become regular smokers by graduation time, would not do so," he reported to the association meeting.

How It Was Worded

The wording of the most effective presentation said something like this, Dr. Horn said:

"You've heard a lot of arguments about smoking cigarettes, but we have something new to say. We have just found out that the smoking of cigarettes causes lung cancer. We did not use to know this, but now there isn't much doubt. Here is some of the evidence . . .

"Think about it before you decide whether or not to smoke."

Besides the immediate and long-range approaches already mentioned, three others were tried in the study. One gave both sides of the smoking-cancer controversy. Another simply told students in an authoritative way that they should not smoke. And the last tried to make the student take the "don't smoke" message home, and so play the role of an adult by making the suggestion to their parents.

A sixth group, as controls, were not "educated" in any way, except to record how many youths normally take up smoking.

Unexpected Finding

Dr. Horn reported the following as an unexpected finding. When parents forbid children to smoke more girls take up the practice than if nothing had been said. More than that, if the parents "strongly disapprove," but let the girl herself make the decision, the chances are better that she will not begin to smoke, Dr. Horn said.

"I leave these negativistic implications to the imagination of all men who are interested in the feminine psychology," Dr. Horn commented.

The students in the study were from eleven city high schools and five Catholic high schools in Portland, Ore., and five high schools in the urban areas, just outside that city. A total of 22,000 students were involved in the study.

In New York, a spokesman for the Tobacco Industry Research Committee, representing cigarette manufacturers, remarked that the American College of Chest Physicians' board of regents recently agreed that "a tremendous amount of research" remains to be done to "ascertain the cause of this disease (lung cancer)" and cited other theories as to its cause.

The industry spokesman said he would not comment on the Cancer Society study itself, but indicated that Dr. Horn's paraphrase of the strongest deterrent argument ("We have just found out that the smoking of cigarettes causes lung cancer") disagrees with the other physicians' findings.

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MIDDLE-AGED MEN CAUTIONED ON FAT

Heart Attacks Linked to Diet as Well as Overweight and High Blood Pressure

SMOKING IS ALSO CITED

Health Parley Is Told That Cholesterol in Blood Can Be Cut Up to 20%

By MURRAY ILLSON
Special to The New York Times.

ATLANTIC CITY, Oct. 23—The middle-aged man who is lean, takes exercise, avoids too much fat in his diet, does not smoke and keeps his blood pressure down apparently has a good chance of avoiding a heart attack.

No one actually said it that way today at the closing session of the American Public Health Association's eighty-seventh annual meeting. But it seemed to be the general conclusion of a panel of experts who discussed the prevention and control of heart disease.

Solid fat in the diet, both animal and vegetable, is the basic cause of the high toll of heart disease in middle-aged American men, according to Dr. Jeremiah Stamler, director of the Chicago Board of Health's Heart Disease Control Program.

Dr. Stamler said that heart attacks annually strike 940 Americans out of every 100,000 and that about a third of these cases are fatal. Coronary disease, he added, accounts for a third of all deaths in men 45 to 54 years old.

Reduction Is Possible

Middle-aged American men appear to have in their blood more cholesterol, a fatty substance, than men in some other parts of the world. Cholesterol plus such other factors as overweight and high blood pressure make for a high degree of risk in the matter of heart disease, he said.

Dr. Stamler noted that cholesterol was "amenable to alteration," meaning that it could be reduced in the blood. By proper diet, he said, the fatty substance could be reduced up to 20 per cent in most persons.

Dr. Jean Mayer of the Harvard School of Public Health said that interpreting statistical material in relation to heart disease was difficult. He noted that some studies showed a correlation between overweight and heart disease, but others did not.

However, he said that generally it would be "fair" to say that such a correlation existed, but that obesity was but one factor.

Dr. Edward D. Freis, senior clinical investigator of the Mount Alto Veterans Administration Hospital in Washington, called high blood pressure "a major cause of heart disease."

Remedial Methods Cited

He said, however, that a recent study "leaves no doubt that methods for controlling blood pressure, at least in the less severe cases, have come of age and are available to any physician who cares to use them."

Dr. E. Cuyler Hammond, director of the Statistical Research Center of the American Cancer Society, spoke on smoking in relation to heart disease. He said he looked on the present evidence as follows:

"We are dealing with a poison—nicotine—which is known to have an acute effect upon the heart and circulatory system. People who partake of a mixture of this and other poisons, including carbon monoxide, have a higher death rate from coronary artery disease than do abstainers. The death rate increases with the dosage."

"From this," he asserted, "one might well conclude that cigarette smoking increases the risk of death from coronary artery disease. I would not bet my life on the hypothesis that such a conclusion is incorrect."

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Source: https://www.industrydocuments.ucsf.edu/docs/klcm0000